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NSC BRIEFING

6 September 1960

BACKGROUND

BERLIN

- I. East German assertion of greater control last week over West German civilian access to West Berlin appears to have been designed as display East German "sovereignty" and as test of Western determination to maintain rights of travel to Berlin.
 - A. Probably also in part to demonstrate capabilities for retaliation in event West German Bundestag goes ahead with plans for annual meeting in West Berlin this fall.
 - B. Ulbricht regime also probably wanted to demonstrate anew to West Berliners their exposed position and limited capability of Western powers to assist them.
 - C. In association with controls levied against travel to West Berlin GDR also took occasion to curtail East German travel to any part of Berlin--an indication of the regime's deep concern over the rising flow of refugees to West Berlin.
 1. Number of West Germans registering at West Berlin refugee centers for past two weeks have been third and fourth highest totals since 1955.
 2. Number of intellectuals, professional people, and military age males among refugees has increased sharply in recent weeks.
- II. The East German moves, nevertheless, do not appear to make a sharp change in Khrushchev's public commitment to maintain the status quo in Berlin until new attempt made for Summit meeting.

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- A. Communists probably hope by such pin-pricks to create anxiety and uncertainty among Western Allies, and to undermine their unity.
- B. Moscow probably considers such harassments and probing actions are useful to focus attention on Berlin problem.
- C. Deliberately ambiguous East German statements on 30 August about access to Berlin, and GDR failure actually to clamp down hard, suggest that Russians unwilling to give Ulbricht free hand in such delicate matter.

III. Situation appears to have returned to normal as far as civilian travel to West Berlin is concerned.

- A. No indications yet concerning ending of internal East German security controls designed to prevent refugees from getting into Berlin.
- B. During five-day period specified by East Germans, no effort was made to interfere with Allied access to West Berlin, despite warnings concerning "misuse" of air corridors.

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